



Instructional Quality Commission

California Department of Education

I write to the California Department of Education in my capacity as a tenured Associate Professor and S.B.S.C. Chair of Sikh Studies at the University of Michigan, and as editor of *Sikh Formations*, the premier academic journal in Sikh Studies.

I was recently made aware of an important issue regarding the education of public school students in the History-Social Science Framework, and more specifically in relation to comments made about the representation of Sikh tradition in relation to others. It appears that the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) as well as California Parents for the Equalization of Educational Materials (CAPEEM) requested that the Commission significantly alter or delete important references to Sikhs and Sikhism within the History-Social Science references in the Framework.

Having read the HAF and CAPEEM's interventions, I would like to register a strong complaint against the requested deletions and alterations of references to Sikhs and Sikhism. The requested deletions and alterations are incorrect and based on serious bias. Sikhism is a religious tradition, independent from others in the Indian subcontinent and elsewhere. The history of the Sikhs as a sovereign people is well documented. The CAPEEM and HAF comments appear to negate this independence and appear to give the impression that Sikhs can simply be lumped with other South Asian groups. I would therefore request that the department of Education leave the original references to Sikhs and Sikhism intact.

I am happy to provide further clarification and assistance in this matter, should this be necessary.

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